

BARNET – DANVILLE – PEACHAM – WALDEN

Caledonia Central Supervisory Union
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PEACHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Monday September 8, 2014

Present

Board: Mark Clough, Wynne Browne

Administration: Mat Forest, Judy Ross

Staff: Cheryl Stevenson

Public: Rick Scholes, Kitty Toll, Cornelia Hasenfuss, Sean Markey, Nate Giroux, Cathy Browne, Holly Cannon, Mihai Tripp, Teri Nicoletta, Melody Morrison, Louis Bushey (Barnet)

Meeting called to order at 6:05 pm.

August minutes approved with no changes

Other Business

Legislative discussion with Kitty Toll, Peacham's Representative in the Vermont House.

Last year's governance bill did not pass, some of the governance bill is likely to be re-introduced in the new session in January. Legislators hear many concerns about school taxes. Concerns do not reflect large school/ small school or urban/rural community constituents. Kitty did not see gains in the consolidation bill introduced last session, the bill did not significantly reduce costs or increase educational opportunities. The data did not support savings nor increase in educational opportunities.

Special education issues. There has been little change in special education population, yet the number of special education staff has doubled. Money was appropriated in the budget to study this and to analyze what works, what are best practices. A consulting group from U Mass hired to do the analysis. Kitty talked to Shap Smith, Speaker of the House. They are both looking forward to the results of the analysis and hope it will provide data which the legislature can work from.

80% of budget is staffing. We don't want to decimate schools by choosing easiest way to save – cut staff.

Small school grants issue. The legislature provides incentives to consolidate. The Small Schools Grant supports small schools. The two are inconsistent.

Some representatives are uncomfortable with public moneys going to private entities, and uncomfortable with school choice and the budgeting to finance it.

School finance is complicated, even those who work with it do not always understand it.

Last year's bill has something not to like for everyone. Bills that originate in House see many changes in the Senate.. Cooperation and compromise are necessary. In the past the House Education Committee worked on bills concerning education policy, the Ways and Means Committee worked on school finance. This year we hope to see committees like Education work on policy and financing.. It should be an improvement to have one committee consider the two aspects together.

The Brigham decision mandated equal financing. Equitable quality of education and how to fairly fund the system are the issues now.

Discussion:

What is important what are we willing to pay for,

Service delivery model restricted by fed and state funding requirements which make it difficult to change delivery methods.

Mandates

Meaning of equitable opportunity

Please contact Kitty with thoughts about pending legislation, likes and concerns about current system

PTF- Cornelia Hasenfuss introduced herself as the new PTF chair and announced the other new officers. PTF hopes to keep an active open dialogue with all constituents of the school community. There are a variety of events planned. Fall Foliage event plans are already in progress, more information to come soon. Support is needed for this and all the activities. PTF funds support the ski and swim programs and more.

Rick Scholes gave a presentation on the new Open Meeting law.

Effective July 1st.

Every committee of every municipality is required to comply with the law.

Agenda must be posted 48 hr prior to any meeting at 3 assigned local places. The School is one of those locations. Others are the Library or Café and the Town Clerk's office. All town notices will be posted at the school.

Regular meeting agendas must be posted 48 hrs before the meeting, special meeting agendas must be posted 24 hours prior.

Meetings are public, no email conversations are permitted. Email discussions about setting meeting times, agendas and such must be posted as well.

Unapproved minutes must be posted within 5 days. Approved minutes posted immediately and should include posted date, as they must remain posted for 28 days.

Meeting for exec session must have an agenda and start as public meeting.

No absentee voting unless by telephone.

Telephone meeting is allowed as long as there is a place where the public can listen to the conversation.

Rick suggests using Melissa as clerk, Selectboard has hired her to take minutes and recommends her.

Special meeting requires a 24 hour notice to newspaper or other generally available media source.

Law effects how to conduct meeting, additions or deletions to the agenda must be discussed first

Penalty \$500 per occurrence, enforced by AG, there are provisions for individuals to file complaints

Pubic input: Mark asked parents to comment on beginning of school year. There was positive feedback including noting the Judy's hard work. The signs are good, parent are looking forward to good results.

Mat commented that there are ambitious goals, and we must show results. He asked that all bring concerns as soon as possible.

A request that school contact parents so they can be a part of any concern about both student and general issues.

Superintendent's Report

Curriculum work has started, the feedback from teachers is positive.

Superintendent and Admin Team have initiated monthly meetings with the Teachers Union Executive Council to discuss issues as they arise and keep an open line of communication.

Technology director position is not to be filled immediately. Superintendent will work with Admin Team to assess needs and re-evaluate the role of Wild Branch.

CCSU is moving forward with accounting software upgrade.

Andrea Watson is taking on the Section 504 compliance in SU. Section 504 and IEP compliance requirements are different and 504 compliance has been inconsistent in the SU. School photos will be opened up for bids.

Irene Harvey, Special Ed provider, increase from .2 to .3 position due to increase student needs.. Approval of the change moved by Wynne, Mark agreed.

Payroll manifest change. Wynne moved that payroll manifest be brought monthly. Mark agreed.

Business Manager Report

Pat Amsden our new Business Manager has instituted some system and procedure changes around contacts, payroll, 21c purchases. The district's STAT reports are her first priority now. Discussion of new business office software and its capabilities. It will provide more timely and accurate reporting and make the business office more efficient.

Curriculum Coordinator Report

Curriculum development work on Common Core aligned units is in process.
New math science coach is visiting schools to assist and to get to know teachers.
Discussion of the Star program for student progress monitoring which provides data on each student's progress. This is a web based assessment system. Any flatline or decline in a student's performance will trigger a reevaluation of instruction.

Special Service Coordinator Report

We have 120 students ages 3 to 22 who are active eligible students in the SU.
Work is continuing on the Multi-Tiered systems of Support. The goal is to reduce the number of referrals for special education in order to access and make progress in the general education curriculum.
A program of Assistive Technology is being considered for some students. We have a part time AT consultant working with specific IEP teams as well as technical and professional assistance through UVM. The project is grant funded

Principal's report

Follows SU goals this year
Judy raised a question about how to dispose of unneeded school equipment including some computer equipment and furniture. It was decided that it would be offered to staff first, then parents and then advertised locally. Funds received will go into the outdoor space project fund.
Circus Smirkus will do a week long residency in the near future. Specifics are still being worked out.
Judy attended Selectboard meeting last week to discuss issues with road safety. Selectboard and School will work with town & state to assess and make improvements. Issues are crosswalks, parking lot circulation, improved school zone signage. VTrans Safe Routes to School program should be helpful.
Discussion.

Old Business:

Facility upgrade. Excessive electricity costs from needed improvements to HVAC systems and other infrastructure. Board is planning a special meeting to review the options with the community.
Marketing committee: Mark has recruited an ad hoc group to do brainstorming. He will report back after the meeting

New business: none

Next meeting Oct 13th

Future agenda items: Hiring clerk for minutes and posting, FY14 financial report

Respectfully submitted,

Wynne Browne